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ABSTRACT

Intended to enable parents to support and advocate for their children during transitions, this guide contains training activities and hands-on action tools to help parents and staff work in partnership as children transition into and out of Early Head Start, Head Start, child care settings, and elementary schools. The guide is divided into three sections. The first section, "Users Guide," provides an introduction to the guide, including its purpose, expected outcomes, audience, performance standards, and organization. This section also provides an orientation session to explore the action tools in the guide as a resource for expanding their individual and program efforts to involve parents in transition activities. The second section, "Program and Parent Action Tools," includes nine action tools to help parents and staff understand transition, the key role parents play, and ways to implement the performance standards. These nine action tools are organized into three broad skill categories that enable parents to: (1) support each child; (2) build partnerships; and (3) strengthen advocacy skills. The third and final section of the guide addresses continuing professional development and guides staff and parents in expanding their skills by networking, joining organizations, and further researching the issue of parent involvement in transition. (SD)

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HEAD START®

Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community

Transitions: Parents Are Key

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Head Start Bureau

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Transitions: Parents Are Key

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Contents

Preface vii

Users Guide 1

Introduction 1

Purpose 1
Outcomes 1
Audience 1
Performance Standards 2
Organization 3

Orientation Session 5

Leading an Orientation Session 5
Handout: Program Planning Sheet 8
Handout: Parent Planning Sheet 9

Program and Parent Action Tools 11

Support Each Child 15

Tool 1 Program Action: Organize a Family Night 16
Parent Action: Create a Family Folder 17
Tool 2 Program Action: Discuss Child's Transition 22
Parent Action: Help Your Child Adjust 23
Tool 3 Program Action: Create a Summer Packet 26
Parent Action: Work with Your Child 27

Build Partnerships 31

Tool 4 Program Action: Plan a Program Tour 32
Parent Action: Learn about the New Program 33
Tool 5 Program Action: Invite Parent Involvement 38
Parent Action: Share Information 39
Tool 6 Program Action: Conduct a Training Workshop 43
Parent Action: Plan for Ongoing Services 45

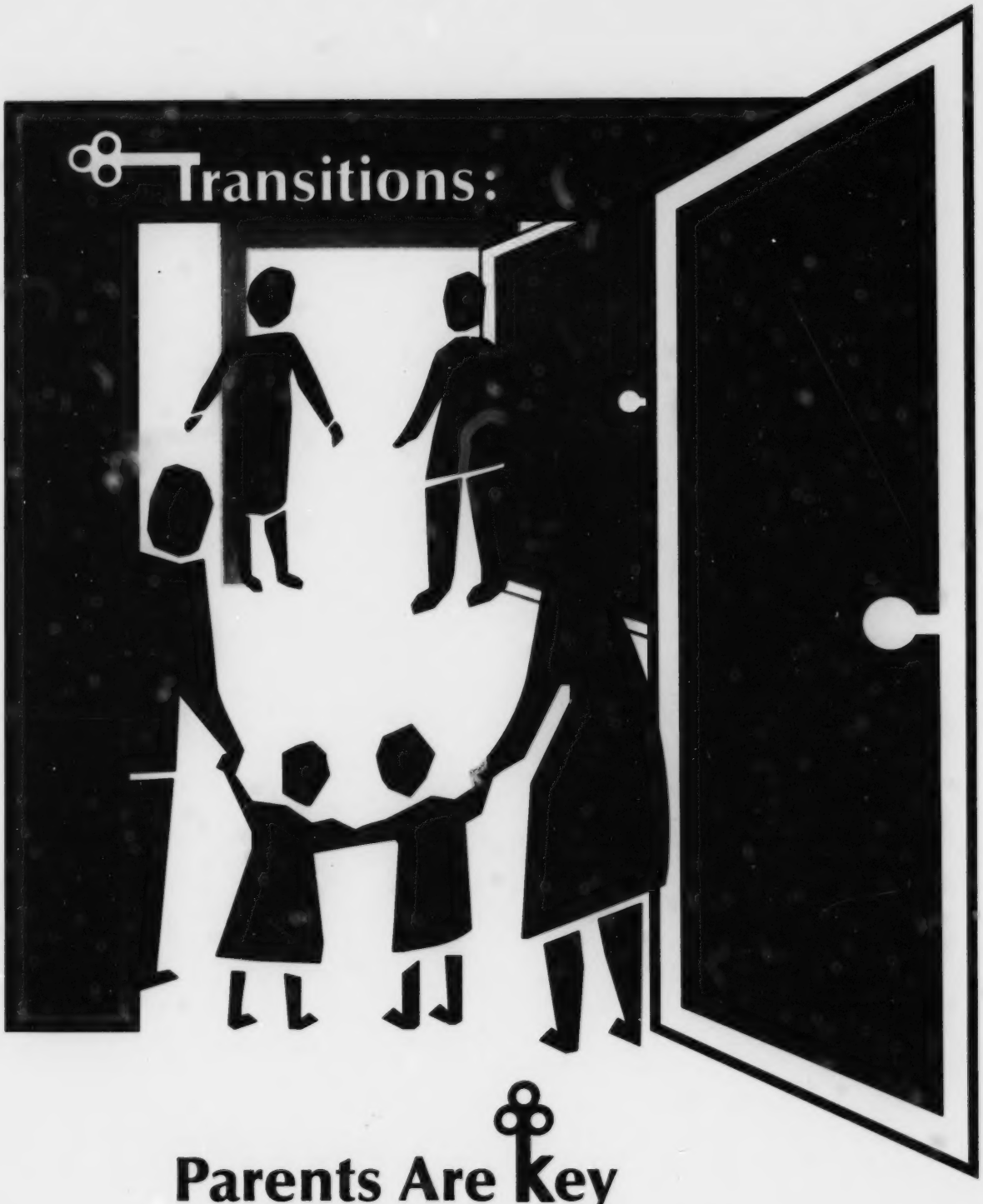
Strengthen Advocacy Skills 51

Tool 7 Program Action: Discuss Family Advocacy 52
Parent Action: Speak Out and Act for Children 53
Tool 8 Program Action: Hold a Panel Discussion 58
Parent Action: Take Part in Making Decisions 59
Tool 9 Program Action: Invite Discussion of a Family Center 62
Parent Action: Stay Involved 63

Continuing Professional Development and Resources .. 67

Continuing Professional Development 69

Resources 77



Parents Are Key

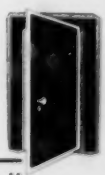
When transitions are viewed as opportunities for continuous learning and growth, Head Start families and staff can guide a young child's next steps together—as partners-in-learning. As their child's first teacher, parents are key to successful early transitions when they:

- Understand the importance of effective transitions in the lives of children and families
- Prepare and support their child before and during transitions
- Learn from others about the new settings by forming ongoing, supportive alliances with other parents and staff
- Advocate for their own child and for all children

Understanding and supporting continuous change and development that children and families experience beginning at birth and continuing throughout the child's life requires information and skills. This guide focuses on the transitions in the early school years. Many of the skills involved in this process are acquired, along with experience, over time. The best lessons are often learned from others in a variety of settings by sharing, observing, practicing, and receiving feedback from friends, family, and trusted staff.

This technical guide is the third in a series of transition training guides. It is designed to assist both parents and staff in developing skills that support the Head Start Program Performance Standards related to transitions. The guide encourages active learning interaction and partnering through guided hands-on activities and tools based upon real life transition situations.

Since partnering is at the core of this guide, Head Start managers can use these materials for joint training and parent and staff development. Just as parents hold a child's hand and offer assurances about a new teacher, caregiver, sibling, home, or school, this training guide invites families and staff to join hands as learning partners who support each other's development. With key information, skills, and supportive relationships, parents and staff can open the doors to successful transitions.



Purpose

What is the purpose of this guide?

The purpose of this guide is to enable parents to support and advocate for their children during transitions. The guide contains training activities and hands-on action tools to help parents and staff work in partnership as children transition into and out of Early Head Start, Head Start, child care settings, and elementary schools.

Why is transition an important issue for staff and parents?

Transition addresses all the changes that occur as a child moves from one setting to another—from home to a program, within a program, or between programs. It is a process that involves children, families, staff, and organizations.

Today children often experience transition as they move into and out of many early childhood programs and classrooms in their early years. Each program and each teacher a child encounters has new routines, expectations, and relationships. Because of children's limited experience, it is often hard for them to deal with these changes. For example, Nathan, a toddler, is used to having his snack at a certain time. He may worry when his snack is not served at the same time in the new setting. Without the words to express his feelings, Nathan may have a temper tantrum. His new caregiver may not pick him up to calm him the way his former caregiver did. He may miss her and cry more.

Young children from birth through age eight learn best when they feel secure and know they can trust the adults caring for them. Children who have experiences like Nathan's may lose their sense of trust and security and may have more difficulty learning.

Outcomes

What are the goals of transition?

The transition process should consider the following goals:

1. Continuity of services and care
2. Minimal disruption of the family system
3. Enhanced child development from one environment to the next
4. Planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation within and between programs and with the family

Audience

What can staff do to help?

This guide is written for all Head Start parents and staff. In general, transitions are easier when children have fewer changes to deal with and when they have time to get used to some things ahead of time, like going to a new building. All children adjust better when individualized plans are made for their transition. It is important for staff to learn about individual interests, temperaments, strengths, and experiences so they can choose the best way to help each child.

Parents have the expertise about their children. When parents and staff build family partnerships they can learn together how to help the child transition into and out of a program. For example, if Nathan's parents and caregiver had worked as partners, sharing information and developing a plan, they could have made his transition easier. Knowing how important routines were to Nathan, his parents might have asked for his snack to be served at his regular time. The teacher might have suggested other routines that could be adjusted until he had established a good relationship with her and felt comfortable.

What can parents do to help?

Parents, not staff, have the responsibility for helping children transition throughout their early lives and education. Parents are powerful advocates who are the key to successful transitions. They can advocate for their child by:

- Sharing what they know about their child
- Working with their child at home
- Learning about new settings and new experiences
- Communicating regularly with staff
- Staying involved in the program
- Networking with other parents
- Speaking out and acting for all children

Performance Standards

What do the Head Start Program Performance Standards require?

As part of the process of individualizing the program and building partnerships, programs must:

- Help parents become their children's advocates and supporters as their children transition into, through, and out of the program
- Conduct periodic staff-parent meetings and one at the end of the year to discuss each child's progress
- Provide education and training to prepare parents to exercise their rights and responsibilities in school settings
- Help parents communicate with teachers in school settings and take part in making decisions that affect their child
- Begin transition planning for each child and family at least six months before the child's third birthday (refer to the Transition series in the *Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community*).

Organization

How will this guide help your program?

This guide encourages planning, partnership, and action. The guide includes nine **Action Tools** to help parents and staff understand transition, the key role parents play, and ways to implement the performance standards. These nine Action Tools are organized into three broad skill categories that enable parents to:

- Support each child
- Build partnerships
- Strengthen advocacy skills

How can you use the Action Tools?

Each of the tools has a three- to five-page section for parents called **Parent Action Tools**. While parents can use the information and suggested action steps independently, they are more likely to explore and use these materials on an ongoing basis when staff or parent leaders introduce families to the information and action steps. An orientation session is a good way to begin.

As a way of introducing the tools, each Action Tool also includes **Program Action** to help staff and parent leaders introduce parents to each tool. Leaders can use the Program Action material to include transition information in regular activities, such as home visits, parent-teacher conferences, training workshops, and program tours. Other tools will help you organize special events, such as a family night, speakers panel, and videotape viewing. You can also include the information in a variety of program materials, including newsletters, program handbooks, or volunteer guides.

Where do you start?

Begin by asking someone to read the guide and use the tips provided for leading an orientation session. The leader can be anyone who is interested in the materials and has training skills. The leader can choose to use the suggestions for the orientation outlined on the following pages, or to design his or her own session.

Parents are best supported through the many relationships they develop in the program. Those who are experienced in working with the program can use the orientation to recognize their opportunities to serve as leaders by supporting other parents. Staff from each program area will learn how they can build on these existing relationships and have a part in helping parents become advocates for their children.

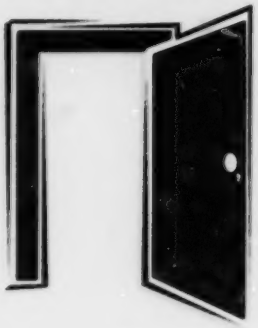
Transitions: Parents Are Key

Support Each Child

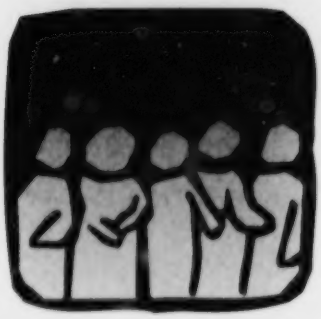
Family Night
Family Folder

Discuss Transitions
Help Child Adjust

Summer Packet



Orientation

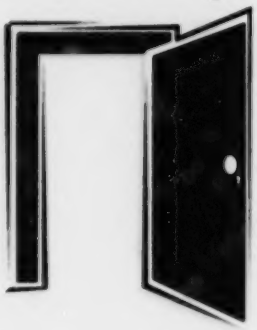


Build Partnerships

Program Tour

Invite Parent Involvement
Share Information

Training Workshop
Plan Ongoing Services

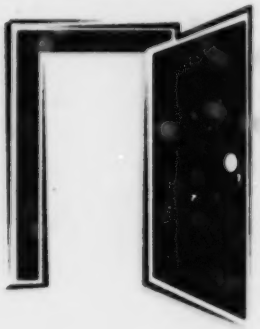


Strengthen Advocacy Skills

Family Advocacy

Panel Discussion
Take Part in Decisions

Family Center
Stay Involved



Leading an Orientation Session

Purpose

The purpose of this orientation session is for families and staff to explore the Action Tools in this guide as a resource for expanding their individual and program efforts to involve parents in transition activities. Participants become familiar with their responsibilities to *Support Each Child, Build Partnerships,* and *Strengthen Advocacy Skills* throughout the transition process.

Suggested Materials

Action Tools: Program Action and Parent Action sections
Information from Introduction section
Head Start Program Performance Standards
Program Planning Sheet
Parent Planning Sheet

Tips for Leaders

- Plan to invite and involve all staff and interested parents in your orientation session.
- Become familiar with all of the Action Tools in this guide so that you are able to provide an overview of each tool.
- Consider dividing your orientation session into two or even three meetings spread throughout the year. The tools in the first two categories, *Support Each Child* and *Build Partnerships*, are easier to understand and use than those in the last category, *Strengthen Advocacy Skills*. You might introduce the easier-to-use tools during the first one or two meetings. In later meetings, you could then revise the plans made in the previous meeting and move onto the more complex tools. This approach gives participants several opportunities to develop a sound program plan that is responsive to individual parent interests.
- Use the Head Start training guides, *Effective Transition Practices: Facilitating Continuity* and *Planning for Transitions*, to find additional information and training resources on the topic of transition.
- During the small group review of Action Tools it may be helpful to ask partners in each group to look at one tool. Once the partners understand the content of the tool, they can work with others in their group to complete the Program Planning Sheet.

Orientation Session

Introduction

1. Ask participants to share with you their view of transition. Then review some of the Parent Stories from the Action Tools and the information on transition in the Introduction.

Discussion

2. Review the Head Start Program Performance Standards and explain that the transition requirements are part of the *Family and Community Partnerships* section of the performance standards. Ask the group to discuss the following:

   What are parents already doing to prepare and support their children before, during, and after transitions?

   How are Head Start parents supporting each other during transitions, both formally and informally?

   How are staff supporting children and families before, during, and after transitions?

   List all responses to these questions on newsprint. Then ask the group:

   What else can parents and staff do, in partnership, to support and advocate for children in transition?

   List all suggestions for the group to see.

   Summarize by explaining that learning from each other's experiences helps build our information and skills, which become the keys to opening new doors during transitions.

Action Tools Review

3. Use the graphic on page 4 to illustrate that the guide is organized into three skill categories that are represented by *doors*. Each skill section contains three key action tools. Explain that participants will now have an opportunity to have hands-on experience with an Action Tool.

   Give participants the Parent Action section of Tool 1. Give them time to read through the suggestions. Then share the Program Action section and explain the relationships between the two sections of the tool. Ask them to consider organizing a family night. Ask:

   Who would organize the family night? When would it be held?

   Is there an event they already do that could be adapted?

   Explain that the tools are designed to be flexible so programs can fit them into existing events and relationships.

Form Small Groups

4. Have participants form small groups and explain that they will be working as part of a larger program planning team. Each group will focus on one of the three categories of tools to help parents and program staff support each child, build partnerships, or strengthen advocacy skills. The planning team will develop ideas for expanding program efforts to involve parents in transition.

Small Group Planning Session

5. Give each group one category of Action Tools. Explain that their task is to brainstorm about how they could use the ideas. For example, Tool 2 might be used by Family Advocates during home visits or by teachers during parent-teacher conferences. Give each group the Program Planning Sheet on the next page and suggest they follow the directions on the sheet to plan ways to use each tool.

Program Planning

6. Create a master Program Planning Sheet on newsprint. Have the small groups present the ideas that fit into scheduled activities. Discuss the steps they need to take and the people that need to be involved to make their plan work.

Parent Planning Sheet

7. Refer participants to the Parent Planning Sheet located on page 9. Explain that this handout can be used by parents to individualize their personal plan for using the Action Tools and tracking their progress.

Follow-up

8. Help the group decide how to follow through on their ideas. Ask small groups what other ideas they feel should be included in the program's plan. Determine what next steps the group wants to take to initiate these new ideas. Hold a follow-up meeting to continue planning.

Handout: Program Planning Sheet

Directions: Review the tools with your group and use the chart to plan how you will use the tools in your program.

Column 1: Review the tool and note the Program and Parent Action suggestions
Column 2: Decide how your program could use the suggestions along with already scheduled activities
Column 3: Decide how your program could use the suggestions to initiate new activities
Column 4: Plan action steps to use the tools
Column 5: Set a target date for each action step

Action Tools	Scheduled Activities	New Activities to Try	Action Steps	Target Date
Tool __ Program Action: Parent Action:				
Tool __ Program Action: Parent Action:				
Tool __ Program Action: Parent Action:				
Tool __ Program Action: Parent Action:				

Handout: Parent Planning Sheet

Before Using the Tool

Which door will you open first?

I plan to start with skills to: ☐ Support each child

☐ Build partnerships

☐ Strengthen advocacy skills

Which key will you use first?

I plan to start with Action Tool _____ on _____

My Goal is _____

I am also interested in using:

Action Tool _____ Action Tool _____ Action Tool _____

Action Tool _____ Action Tool _____ Action Tool _____

Action Tool _____ Action Tool _____

How will you move through the door?

I plan to use the Tools ____by myself ___ with a partner ___ in a small group

Names of partners: _____

After Using the Tool

(Use this space to record what you learned; important accomplishments; questions or concerns.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Our next session will be: (Date, time) _____ (Tool) _____

Program and Parent Action Tools

Parents and Programs Use Transition Action Tools to...

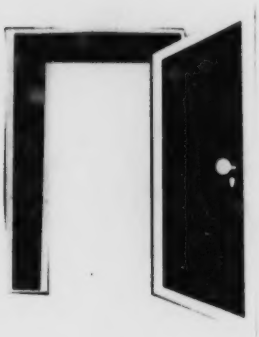
Support Each Child

1 Organize a Family Night
Create a Family Folder

2 Discuss Child's Transition
Help Your Child Adjust

3 Create a Summer Packet
Work with Your Child

Build Partnerships



4 Plan a Program Tour
Learn about the New Program

5 Invite Parent Involvement
Share Information

6 Conduct a Training Workshop
Plan for Ongoing Services

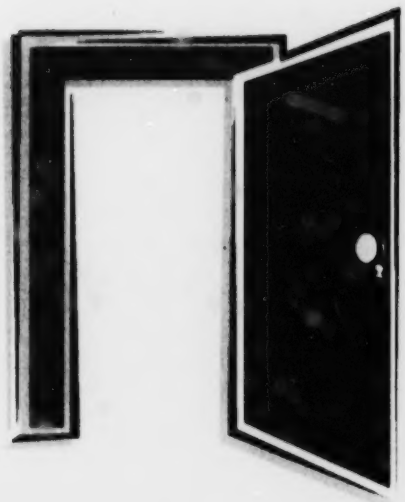
Strengthen Advocacy Skills

7 Discuss Family Advocacy
Speak Out and Act for Children

8 Hold a Panel Discussion
Take Part in Making Decisions

9 Invite Discussion of a Family Center
Stay Involved

Action Tools to Support Each Child in Transition



Program Action: Organize a Family Night
Parent Action: Create a Family Folder

Program Action: Discuss Child's Transition
Parent Action: Help Your Child Adjust

Program Action: Create a Summer Packet
Parent Action: Work with Your Child

Program Action: Organize a Family Night

Purpose

Families organize personal information to share with teachers in the current or new program.

Staff can use the information received from families to help individualize classroom activities and create transition supports.

Suggested Materials

Tool 1—Parent Action: Create a Family Folder
Pocket folders
Art materials
Sample Family Folder

Tips for Leaders

- Invite family members to come to the program for a potluck dinner and parent-child activities. Plan several parent-child activities (including making a Family Folder) to be conducted at the same time. This way you can keep the groups small and avoid confusion.
- Review the information and create a sample Family Folder. Gather art materials and organize them in a room with plenty of space to spread out.

Leading the Activity

- Show participants your sample Family Folder and use the information on sides 1 and 2 of the Parent Action pages to explain the purpose of creating these folders.
- Explain that during the activity, parents and children can work together on decorating side 3 of the Parent Action pages. Parents may also complete sides 2 and 4 during the activity.
- Suggest that parents use the additional ideas from side 1 to add to their folder when they are at home.

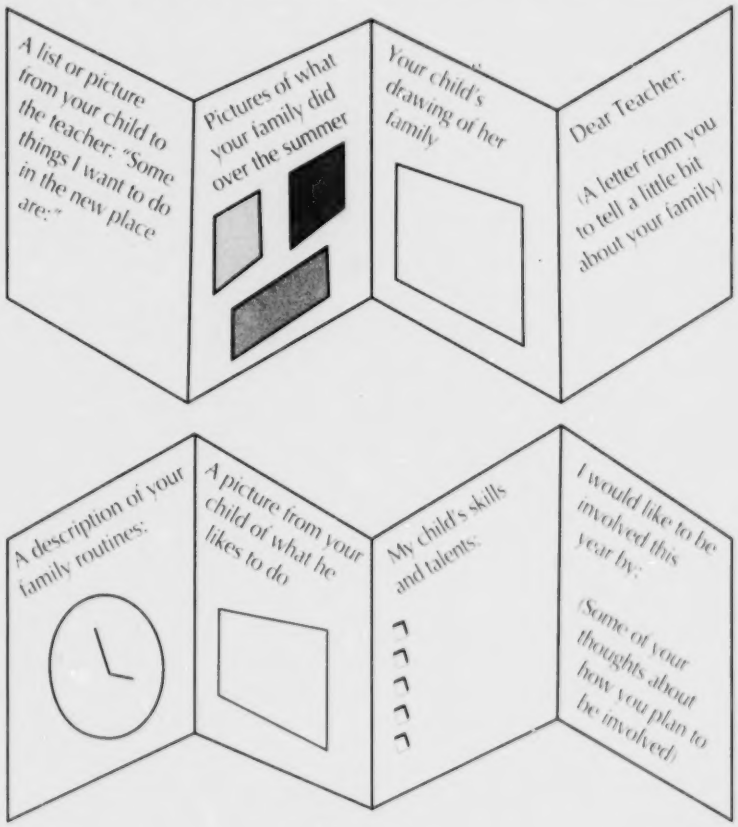
Parent Action: Create a Family Folder

Purpose: Your child is special! Share what you know about your child with new teachers.

A Family Folder

There are some records you will need when your child begins a new program. If you have not already created a **Family Story Book**, you can make a **Family Folder** to keep copies of records and papers such as:

- ❑ Immunization records
- ❑ Health screenings
- ❑ Allergy information
- ❑ Special needs assessments
- ❑ Child's birth certificate
- ❑ Child's social security card


A list or picture from your child to the teacher: "Some things I want to do in the new place are:"
Pictures of what your family did over the summer
Your child's drawing of her family
Dear Teacher:
(A letter from you to tell a little bit about your family)
A description of your family routines:
A picture from your child of what he likes to do
My child's skills and talents:
I would like to be involved this year by:
(Some of your thoughts about how you plan to be involved)

Making the folder

1. Use the list above to help decide what you would like to include.
2. Find the papers or create them with your child. (Some sample pages are included on sides 2–4 of this tool.)
3. Place all of the papers in a special folder. Decorate the folder with your child.
4. Talk together and see how the child feels about upcoming changes.

Using the folder

1. The first week of school, ask the teacher if she would like to see your Family Folder.
2. If possible, arrange a meeting to give the teacher the folder.
3. If a meeting is not possible, you might ask the bus driver or an older child to take it to the teacher. Another good time to share the folder is during a home visit.

Parents are the experts on their children

You know about your child's:

- ❑ Health, development, and temperament
- ❑ Relationships with others
- ❑ Interests and strengths
- ❑ Special needs
- ❑ Usual way of dealing with change

Every day, you learn more about:

- ❑ What your child can do
- ❑ What your child likes and dislikes
- ❑ How your child gets along with others
- ❑ How your child takes care of himself
- ❑ What she notices around her

Because you know so much about your child, it is important to share this information with your child's new teachers and staff members. As you build your **Family Folder**, you may want to include some of the samples that follow to introduce your child to the new staff.

Action Step: What information will YOU share about your child's skills?

My child knows how to:

My child is good at:

Action Step: Work with your child to complete the following phrases. Have your child draw the pictures. You can write the labels.

Some things I like to do are:

Some things I want to do in the new place are:

Action Step: Sharing your Family Folder with staff members

The first few days of school are busy ones for teachers, parents, and children. When you share your Family Folder at the beginning of the year, it may help to explain what it is and why you are sharing it. Below is a sample letter you may want to use or adapt.

Dear _____: (Teacher's Name)

I am pleased to share my **Family Folder** with you. This folder includes a lot of information about my child, _____, and our family. Some of the papers are ones I know the school needs for its records. Other special papers (such as my child's family portrait) will help you learn a little more about our family.

I would like to meet with you to talk about the folder and our goals for the year. You can call me at _____. The best time to call me is_____.

I am looking forward to working with you this year. Please let me know how I can help.

Sincerely,

_____

Adapted from the Dallas Head Start-Public Schools Transition Demonstration Project

Program Action: Discuss Child's Transition

Purpose

Families learn what their child's actions can tell them about her feelings and thoughts. Using developmental information, they plan ways to help the child feel secure in the new program.

Staff work with parents to identify strategies that have helped a child with previous transitions and those that might help with the current transition.

Suggested Materials

Tool 2—Parent Action: Help Your Child Adjust
Videotape of child in classroom
Stories, examples, or records of the child's classroom behavior

Suggested Time

During home visits, parent-teacher conferences, at the beginning or end of the day, or other one-on-one meetings with parents

Tips for Leaders

- All parents want to know that their child is *normal*. Make sure you explain that children of the same age behave in many different ways.
- Keep in mind that some parents may have difficulty reading the developmental chart by themselves. Take time to go over it with them.
- You can use a videotape of the child or written records to share what you have observed in the classroom.

Guiding a Discussion

- Ask parents to talk about how they feel about their child's transition and how they think their child feels about it. You can use the information on side 1 of the Parent Action pages to share basic things parents can do to help their child.
- Refer to the first Action Step and ask parents what has helped their child deal with change in the past. Suggest that they list these to start a record of strategies that can be shared with new teachers.
- Show parents how they can use the charts to find out what their child's behavior means. Talk about the suggestions for parents listed in the last column of the chart. Find out the things parents feel will help their child most and how they plan to use the ideas.

Parent Action: Help Your Child Adjust

Purpose: Learn what your child's actions can tell you about his or her feelings. Plan ways to help your child feel secure in the new program.

Parents can do some basic things to help their children feel more comfortable with transitions. For example:

- Talk with your child about what will be happening
- Visit the new program or school ahead of time
- When possible, avoid making lots of changes at once
- Create daily routines so your child knows when you will leave and return

Even when you use these strategies, your child may have a hard time understanding and dealing with change. When you learn more about your child's development it is easier to choose other ways to help him adjust.

Action Step: Choose strategies that will help your child deal with change

Think about what has helped your child deal with change in the past:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Use the chart for your child's age group to find out what else you can try:*

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

* Remember your child is unique and all children grow at their own pace. The behavior listed on the chart for each age group just gives some examples of ways your child may act.

Infants approx. 0 – 2 years	Infants explore the world when they feel secure. They develop trust and security through nurturing, consistent caregiving.			
Does your child do this?	YES	NO	Maybe your child feels:	You could try this:
Cries when you leave			Anxious about being away from you Doesn't understand or know that you will return	Always let your child know when you are leaving. At first, leave him for short periods of time, and then gradually add time.
Clings to security objects (e.g. a blanket or favorite toy)			Misses familiar habits and routines	Bring security objects from home and share all you can about the child's routines, likes, and dislikes.
Demands extra attention			Unsure about the new caregiver	Help your child and teacher develop a relationship before the first day. Visit the program several times and complete home visits.

Toddlers approx. 18 mos – 3 years	Toddlers want to do things on their own, but they often need help. They are sensitive to moods and know when adults are stressed.			
Does your child do this?	YES	NO	Maybe your child feels:	You could try this:
Has temper tantrums			Afraid or out of control Upset that you left for the day	Talk with the teacher daily so that you know what happens at school and if anything is troubling your child.
Clings to you			Safe with you Doesn't want you to leave	Create rituals for saying good-bye. Give a big hug and kiss. Wave at the window.
Does not sleep well			Worried about changes she does not understand	Stay calm and reassuring. Make sure you talk about your concerns with the teacher in private.

Preschool Age approx. 3 – 5 years	Preschool age children try to explain things but they often mix up fantasy and reality. They are learning what they are able to do.			
Does your child do this?	YES	NO	Maybe your child feels:	You could try this:
Cries about school or complains of illness			Unsure about whether the new environment is safe and secure	Spend time with your child in the new setting. Always say good-bye and tell the child you will see her at the end of the day.
Acts like he did when he was younger			Uncomfortable with new routines, activities, teachers, and friends	Give the child some control over the situation. Share his interests and abilities with the teacher and suggest some things that he might enjoy doing in the new program.
Uncooperative at home and/or at school or has angry outbursts			Overwhelmed by new expectations	Encourage her to talk about her feelings with you. Tell her about times when you had similar feelings and how you dealt with them.

Primary Age approx. 5 – 8 years	Primary age children can explain their thoughts and feelings. Peers are becoming more important to them now.			
Does your child do this?	YES	NO	Maybe your child feels:	You could try this:
Complains about the new teacher			Happy with the way things were and misses old friends and teachers	Have your child draw a special picture or spend extra time with old friends before leaving. Keep in touch after the transition. Invite new and old classmates to play.
Asks for help often			Unsure if he will be able to do what is expected. He is under pressure to do a lot of new things, such as sitting in a desk and following a set schedule.	Find out what is expected and help him practice his skills at home. Remind him of what he knows already and what he does well.

Program Action: Create a Summer Packet

Purpose

Families use summer activities to help their child prepare for and adjust to fall transitions.

Staff work as partners with community members to provide resources to families.

Suggested Materials

Tool 3—Parent Action: Work with Your Child
Art materials
Sample Time Capsule and Feelings Game
Community calendar

Tips for Preparing Packets

- Talk with those in the community who offer summer programs to find out what activities are available and include them on a calendar. Gather ideas for additional parent-child home activities from teachers, librarians, and other interested community members.
- Put summer packet materials together in a bag or box. Sometimes programs buy tote bags with their logo. Other programs ask businesses to donate plastic bags. You can get other ideas by talking with staff from other early childhood programs in your area.
- Review the information and prepare a sample Time Capsule or create a sample Feelings Game. You can display the materials when you introduce the summer packet to parents.

Ideas for Introducing the Summer Packet

- Celebrate with parents their contribution to their children's success. You might give them certificates of appreciation, make corsages for them, or post children's drawings of their parents. During the event present parents with the summer packet.
- Write a newsletter article about the importance of parents' working with their child to help prepare him for the next school year. Tell what your program has included in the summer packet and remind parents to take time to look at the sample Time Capsule and Feeling Game.

Parent Action: Work with Your Child

Purpose: Children learn about their feelings and how to adjust to a new setting by doing hands-on activities. Try these ideas to help your child.

Important Points

Transitions don't happen all at once. Usually there is a **period of adapting to change**. Letting go, uncertainty, and taking hold are three common stages.

Letting go: When children are most attached to the people and places they are leaving

Uncertainty: When they feel the new place may be exciting, but are not confident about it

Taking hold: When they learn about the new place and begin to feel comfortable

Letting Go

Help your child say good-bye to old places and faces.

Time Capsule

Who: Ages 3 to 6

What you need: A shoe box, paper, crayons, tape, favorite things from preschool

How to do it: Explain to your child that you are going to make a box for all of her preschool or kindergarten treasures. This is called a *time capsule*, because it helps you remember a special time in your life.

Talk with your child about what he would like to include. For example:

- ❑ artwork
- ❑ pictures
- ❑ videos
- ❑ nametags
- ❑ souvenirs
- ❑ special gifts

As you make the Time Capsule, talk with your child about his special memories. Tell her about a time when you left someplace special to you. Store the *time capsule* in a place where he can get it by himself.

Why: It is hard for children to leave a place where they feel comfortable and safe. Creating a *time capsule* helps them know they are growing and learning. When they feel proud and confident it easier to try new things.

Drop Me a Line

Who: Ages 3 to 5

What you need: Paper, crayons

How to do it: Ask your child to help you write a letter to her teacher. You can write down her words. She can draw a picture and sign the letter.

Why: This letter lets your child know he won't be forgotten. In addition, she practices pre-reading skills.

Uncertainty

Help your child understand his feelings and gain confidence.

Surprised

Angry

Scared

Sad

Disappointed

Happy

The Feelings Game

Who: Ages 3 to 5

What you need: Decorate six paper plates with these faces: surprised, angry, scared, sad, disappointed, happy.

How to do it: Start with one or two plates. Ask your child:

1) What does this person feel?

2) When do you feel this way?

3) What do you do when you feel this way?

Add plates gradually and spend time talking about each feeling. You can also use the activity for problem solving. For example, when your child is angry, show him the picture of the angry face and ask, "What else can you do when you are angry?"

Why: Children have many feelings during transition. While they are excited, they also feel scared. This activity gives children the words to express themselves.

When: Practice anytime. Use the plates if your child is having trouble telling you about their feelings during transitions.

Adapted with permission from *HIPPY Creative Games* (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters). New York: HIPPY USA, 1996.

Picture This

Who: Ages 2 to 8

How to do it: While visiting a new school, take a picture of your child. Make a frame and put the picture in a place at home where your child will see it all the time.

Why: This helps the child *picture* what it will be like at the new school.

Friendly Faces

Who: Ages 2 to 8

How to do it: Talk to people in your neighborhood. Look for families whose children will be attending the same school or child care program as your child.

Arrange a time when the children can play together.

You can also plan with other families to take a day trip in your neighborhood, go to the library, or make a special project together.

Why: Children often worry about who will be in the new setting. If they make friends ahead of time, children know they will find a friendly face in the new place. This activity also helps them learn how to meet new people.

Taking Hold

Help your child adjust to the new program.

Pack Your Bags

Who: Ages 2 to 5

What you need: A bag or a backpack labeled with child's name

What to do: Explain to your child that you are going to prepare for an adventure to her new school. Show her the bag and help her find her name on it. Let her put one or two things in the bag. For example:

- A family picture
- A special blanket
- A favorite toy
- A stuffed animal

Why: Young children feel more secure in a new setting when they have familiar objects with them.

When: A day or two before a major transition

Note: Check with staff about policies for bringing items from home.

Smooth Good-byes

Who: All ages

How to do it: Each morning, take time to get your child settled into school. Create a ritual for saying good-bye, such as giving a kiss and waving from the door. Be sure he knows when you will return.

Why: Good-byes are stressful. Morning patterns will help your child feel more comfortable.

Setting Routines

Who: All ages

How to do it: Set a daily routine

Why: To make sure your child is ready for school each day

Getting up _____a.m.
Children don't like being rushed. You and your child can make lunches and select clothes the night before. Children gain skills when they help make decisions that affect their day.

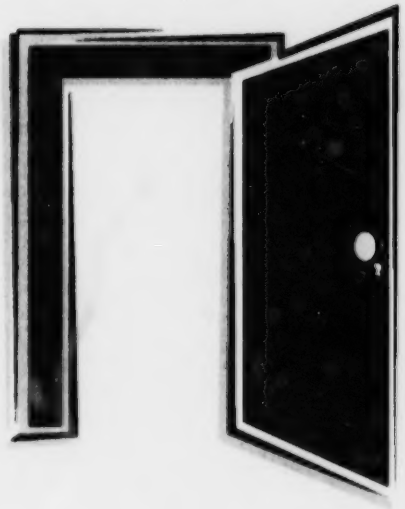
Breakfast _____a.m. **Lunch _____p.m.**
Don't forget breakfast! Studies show that children who eat breakfast are more alert. Pack a healthy lunch or make sure the school or program serves this meal.

After school activities _____p.m. **Homework _____p.m.**
Your child needs time to unwind. School age children need a set time and place for studying.

Dinner _____p.m.
Eat as a family when you can. It gives you a time to talk. Your child learns new words and talking skills.

Bedtime _____p.m.
Your child needs plenty of rest to do well in school. Bedtime rituals like reading a story and taking a bath help calm children.

Action Tools to Build Partnerships with Families



Program Action: Plan a Program Tour
Parent Action: Learn about the New Program

Program Action: Invite Parent Involvement
Parent Action: Share Information

Program Action: Conduct a Training Workshop
Parent Action: Plan for Ongoing Services

Program Action: Plan a Program Tour

Purpose

Families meet with new staff and learn about a program or school their child may attend in the future.

Staff work in partnership with staff from other community settings to plan for transitions.

Suggested Materials

Tool 4—Parent Action: Learn About the New Program
Dates of events listed on side 1 of the tool

Tips for Leaders

- Find out what programs or schools parents would like to visit. Meet with staff from that program to plan a tour. Let them know that parents want to see the classrooms, talk with the teachers, and meet with administrators.
- Plan to meet with parents and discuss the Parent Action Tool before you go on the tour. On side 1 of the tool, fill in dates of upcoming events.

Guiding a Discussion

- Begin your parent meeting by asking what parents hope to learn on the visit. Make sure they know that the tour can help them learn about and prepare for changes. Share the Parent Action Tool and refer them to the upcoming events and other action steps listed on side 1.
- Ask parents to recall how they learned about Head Start services when they enrolled. Explain that it takes time to learn about any program. On the tour they can begin by looking around, asking questions, and reviewing program information. As they become involved in the new program they will learn more.
- Refer parents to side 2 of the tool and point out that some services will be the same as Head Start and some will be different. Suggest that parents choose one or two services they want to know about and plan a few questions to ask staff. Point out sample questions on side 3.
- Suggest parents plan a time to visit the new program with their child. They can use side 4 of the Parent Action Tool to talk with the teacher about the changes the child will experience.

Parent Action: Learn about the New Program

Purpose: Many things will change for you and your child in the new school or program. Find out what to look for on a visit and how to ask questions to learn all you can about the program.

Preparing for changes

You can find out how things will change by visiting the school and attending informational meetings. When you take time to meet staff, share information, and ask questions, you show staff that you care about your child's education. This is the beginning of a new partnership.

Visits help your child

Visiting a new school makes your child feel at home. The more you visit before school starts, the more you will both learn.

Check with your local Head Start Program to learn if the following suggestions are possible:

- ❑ Arrange for a classroom visit or a personal tour
- ❑ Make a video or take pictures of your child at the school
- ❑ Attend a school program with other children
- ❑ Have a family picnic on school grounds
- ❑ Take a walk to the school

Action Step: Making connections

There are many ways to get to know your child's new school and staff.

1) Talk with staff to find out when each of these activities will be held.

2) Plan which events you will attend.

Date	Will Attend	
_____	_____	School/program orientation
_____	_____	Head Start visits to kindergarten
_____	_____	School staff visits to your program
_____	_____	Combined Head Start/school classroom activities
_____	_____	Parent information nights and parent meetings
_____	_____	Home visits
_____	_____	Transition planning meetings (see Tool 6)
_____	_____	Other: _____
		_____

Action Step: Checklist for a visit

When you visit the school or program, you can look for both new and familiar things. Take your time to see everything and visit with teachers, administrators, and other staff. You will learn some things about the program, like its building size, just by looking. To learn more, ask staff to talk with you and give you written information on these program areas:

People

- ❑ Teachers and other staff
- ❑ Child's classmates
- ❑ Parent network
- ❑ Community connections

Program Goals

- ❑ Goals for children
- ❑ Goals for teachers
- ❑ Goals for the school

Building Space

- ❑ Classroom furniture and materials arrangement
- ❑ Classroom size
- ❑ Building size
- ❑ Location of bathrooms

Services

- ❑ Support services (e.g., speech therapy or counseling)
- ❑ Parent involvement
- ❑ Program decision making
- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Meals

Classroom

- ❑ Rules
- ❑ Group activities
- ❑ Individual activities
- ❑ Teacher help
- ❑ Routines
- ❑ Testing

Special Questions:

What other questions does your family have about the new school?

Action Step: As you meet new staff you may want to ask:

- ❑ What do you expect my child to learn?
- ❑ What is the daily schedule?
- ❑ How will my child be tested?
- ❑ How do you expect my child to behave?
- ❑ How can I help the school?
- ❑ Other: _____

Other ways to learn about the new program

Action Step: There are many other ways to learn about the new school or program

- ❑ Review school handbooks
- ❑ Talk with parent leaders
- ❑ Ask for written policies
- ❑ Read school newsletters
- ❑ Ask Head Start staff for information
- ❑ Talk with children and parents in the new school
- ❑ Attend board meetings or parent meetings

My daughter's kindergarten teacher was so surprised to hear what my child had been doing in Head Start. Before I talked with her, she assumed Head Start children would be behind. Now she's seen that Head Start children are at the head of the class. My child learned social skills that are helping her do well in school.

Former Head Start Parent

During a personal visit

Action Step: Share this list with the new teacher to help him prepare for your child

These things will be new for my child:

_____

_____

_____

These things will be familiar to my child:

_____

_____

_____

My child says these things about the new school:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Program Action: Invite Parent Involvement

Purpose

Families learn the importance of working as partners with staff to support children. Using information from home and school, they take part in making decisions about the child's transition.

Staff work with parents to create family partnership agreements based on family information and goals.

Suggested Materials

Tool 5—Parent Action: Share Information
Examples, stories, or records of the child's classroom behavior
Written program materials

Suggested Time

During home visits, in parent-teacher conferences, at the beginning or end of the day, or in other one-on-one meetings with parents

Tips for Leaders

- Some parents may have difficulty reading or understanding materials sent home. Some may need help reading but not want to tell you this. You can ask whether parents would like to read or talk about the sample materials you brought.
- Many people are nervous about talking with teachers. Use the tool to point out the reasons two-way communication is so important and to help parents become more comfortable talking about their child.

Guiding a Discussion

- Invite parents to work with you as partners. Use sides 1 and 2 of the Parent Action pages to discuss the value of sharing information and working together throughout the year.
- Use side 2 to point out and share samples of the materials your program uses to communicate with families. Ask parents to identify their preferred communication style. Plan together how you can best share information.
- Use the ideas from sides 3 and 4 of the Parent Action pages to help parents identify specific information they want to share and how they can work as partners with you.

Parent Action: Share Information

Purpose: Communication between home and school helps children adjust better. Try these tips to talk with and work closely with staff to make decisions about your child.

Parents and teachers working together

Have you ever wished you could have a window into your child's day? By talking with the teacher, you can learn about what your child is doing and how she is acting while you are apart. This is especially important during transitions because it helps you know how your child is adjusting.

Parents and teachers have different perspectives

Teachers see your child:

- ❑ Playing with other children
- ❑ Learning from school activities
- ❑ Without other family members
- ❑ During school hours
- ❑ Based on their training as teachers

You see your child:

- ❑ Playing with family members
- ❑ Learning from family activities
- ❑ During many ages and stages
- ❑ Each day for many years
- ❑ Based on your relationship as a parent

Communication is a two-way street

Ongoing communication is like a two-way street—information goes both ways between home and school. As information travels back and forth, parents and staff learn more about how to work together to help the child learn.

How schools communicate with families

Schools have many ways of letting you know what is happening in the classroom throughout the year. You may receive:

- School calendars
- Parent and classroom newsletters
- Informational flyers
- Newspaper articles
- Home visits
- Teacher notes
- Telephone calls from staff
- Hotline or voice mail phone numbers

Action Step: A window into your child's day

Take the first steps to learn more about what your child is doing during the school day. Find out how your child is adjusting to changes.

- ❑ Write notes to the teacher and respond to any letters he sends to you.
- ❑ Call the teacher if you have questions and respond quickly to her messages.
- ❑ Drop by the classroom and attend back-to-school nights and special programs.
- ❑ Volunteer and do all you can when the teacher needs extra help.
- ❑ Review your child's work and ask the teacher to discuss your child's progress.
- ❑ Attend parent-teacher conferences and arrange other meetings if you have questions or concerns.
- ❑ Call the parent hotline and use voice mail to leave messages for staff.

As your child adjusts to the new setting

One example of working as partners with teachers	Action Step: Work with teachers to help your child adjust to a new setting
1. **John's father and teacher shared what they knew about how he was acting since starting in school:** John was not napping at school and he was having tantrums at home.	**Step 1: Share what you know and talk with the teacher about:** What you and the teacher have observed about your child Any concerns or questions you or the teacher have
2. **John's father and teacher thought about what they had shared:** John was having temper tantrums because he was tired.	**Step 2: Decide what you learned from talking with the teacher** Our observations are: _____similar _____different What we learned What I want to know more about
3. **Together they decided:** John needed help learning the routine so he could sleep at school.	**Step 3: Make decisions together** ❑ What goals need to be set for the child? ❑ What are some goals to accomplish at home? ❑ What are some goals to accomplish at school?
4. **They planned and reviewed:** His teacher would sing him a song from home at nap time. John's teacher and father would talk each day.	**Step 4: Plan and review** Work with the teacher to create a plan: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 and see how your plan is working.

Tips for talking with teachers and staff

1. Prepare ahead of time: *What are your questions?*

2. Choose a good time: *Find out when the teacher is available to talk.*

3. Come prepared to listen: *The teacher has lots to share, too.*

4. Be open to suggestions: *The teacher wants to work together with you.*

5. Give and expect respect: *You and the teacher are partners.*

When my daughter graduated from Head Start, the only volunteering experience I had was in her preschool classroom. As she began kindergarten, I knew I wanted to stay involved, but I didn't quite know what my role would be.

I started making desserts for the teacher, and we began talking about casual things. One thing led to another, and doors started to open.

I found that it became easier to get involved in making decisions, and I felt welcome to be a part of things. Being thoughtful about my approach was the best decision I made. The relationship the teacher and I have built helps my daughter every day.

Former Head Start Parent,
Dallas, TX

Program Action: Conduct a Training Workshop

Purpose

Families learn about transition planning meetings. They prepare for an upcoming transition by identifying how their support network could change and identifying information to share with a transition planning team.

Staff learn about requirements for transition planning. They work with parents to identify any gaps in services that may occur when families leave the program.

Suggested Materials

Tool 6—Parent Action: Plan for Ongoing Services
Overhead of Parent Action side 1
Example(s) of a Family Map
Example(s) of completed planning sheet (Parent Action side 5)
Sign-up sheet for transition planning meetings

Tips for Leaders

- Talk with staff who have participated in transition planning meetings to make sure you understand how they are usually run. They can also give you some good examples of action steps to include on sample planning sheets.
- Follow the directions on side 3 of the Parent Action pages to map your own Family Support Network. This will help you explain how to make and interpret maps more easily.
- Be sure to keep personal information confidential. For more information about the kinds of transition planning meetings your program can conduct refer to *Planning for Transitions*.
- Allow 90 to 120 minutes for the workshop.

Program Action: Conduct a Training Workshop (continued)

Leading the Workshop: Use each side of the Parent Action pages to conduct the training activity

Introduction

Ask participants to introduce themselves and tell what they hope to learn from the workshop. Share the workshop purpose.

Side 1

Make an overhead and give participants a copy of this page. Review the information about transition planning requirements. Talk about the transition planning meetings your program offers.

Side 2

Explain who may attend a transition planning meeting. Ask participants what kind of information they think each person in the meeting might share. Encourage participants to give several examples of different kinds of input parents, senders, receivers, and service providers can provide. List their ideas on newsprint. Then share other ideas from the Parent Action page.

Side 3

Use the background information to explain what a Family Support Network is and how Family Mapping can help parents prepare for transition meetings. Give participants a sheet of paper and guide them through the steps of making their own map.

Side 4

Have participants privately answer the questions about their own network. As a group, discuss the questions and talk about the kinds of supports that families rely on. Share information on other community resources available.

Side 5

Divide participants into small groups and give them a sample completed planning sheet. First have groups discuss how the parent could follow through to make sure that everyone does their part. Then ask the groups to share their ideas.

Conclusion

Ask parents to sign up to schedule a transition planning meeting. Give blank planning sheets to use during upcoming meetings. Suggest parents review the Parent Action pages again before meeting with their team.

Parent Action: Plan for Ongoing Services

Purpose: You can take an active role in transition planning. Find out how to work with a team to be sure family services you need will continue.

Playing a role in transition planning

Sometimes the biggest transition challenge is making sure that services continue. For example, if your child receives speech therapy in Head Start, how will she receive this service in the new school? Parents, staff, and community members can help make sure there are no gaps in services when they work together to plan for transitions.

Head Start programs must:

- Meet with parents before they transition out of the program to help them understand their child's progress
- Help parents communicate with teachers and other school personnel
- Coordinate the transfer of records with receiving programs and schools
- Begin planning each child's transition out of Early Head Start at least six months before the child turns three

Head Start Program Performance Standards, Sections 1304.40(h) and 1304.41(c)

Know your family's rights

If your child has a disability, transition planning teams must:

- ❑ Include parents in the process
- ❑ Write a transition plan
- ❑ Develop an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) for children age three years or an IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) for children under three
- ❑ Begin planning at least six months before the child's third birthday

Transition Planning Teams involve **families, senders** (current staff), **receivers** (new staff), and community **service providers**. These teams meet to share information and help make transitions smooth for children and their families.

Action Step: Use a checklist for sharing information during transition planning meetings

You can share information about:

- ❑ Your child's skills, interests, and experiences
- ❑ Goals for your child and yourself
- ❑ Your family's values
- ❑ How you have been involved in your child's education
- ❑ How current supports and services have helped you reach your goals
- ❑ What services or supports you are requesting begin or continue
- ❑ Other _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

You can ask senders to share information about:

- ❑ Your child's progress in the program
- ❑ How the program benefited from your family's contributions
- ❑ Program curriculum, services provided, and transition activities
- ❑ Teacher ideas for making your child's transition out of the old program easier

You can ask receivers to share information about:

- ❑ Registration requirements
- ❑ Program curriculum, goals, services, and transition activities
- ❑ Teacher ideas for making your child's transition into the new program easier

You can ask service providers to share information about:

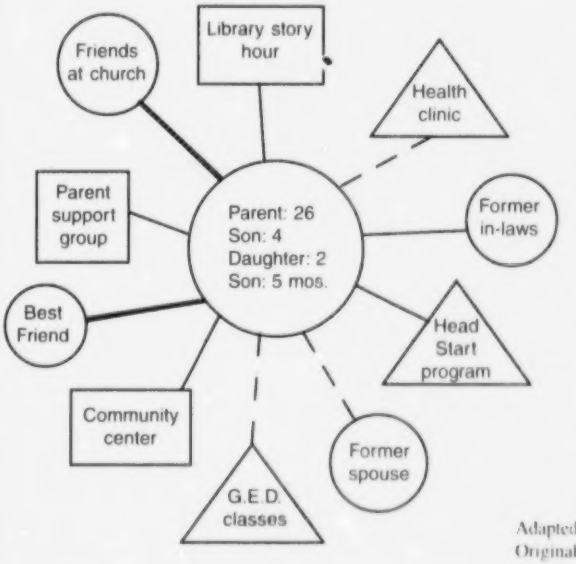
- ❑ Services they provide
- ❑ Requirements for continuing services
- ❑ Other community resources to contact

Background Information: Your Family Support Network

You probably have at least one other person you depend on to help you. It may be a friend who watches your children while you do errands or a helpful nurse from the community clinic. You may also use community programs and services such as job training, referrals, and dental care. All these people, places, and services make up your **Family Support Network**. Some families have used **Family Mapping** to prepare for a move to another setting. It helps them see the community connections they can build on to continue receiving services.

Action Step: Map out your family support network

- ❑ On a blank sheet of paper, make a large circle for your family and write the names of the family members in your home.
- ❑ In small **circles** around the family circle write the names of other people who support you, including close family members who don't live in your home, baby sitters, or teachers.
- ❑ Make and label **squares** on your map to show the community places you visit, such as church, school, or community centers.
- ❑ Make and label **triangles** on your map to show the community services you use, such as health clinics, family service agencies, or community food banks.
- ❑ Which people, places, and services give you support? Make a **solid line** connecting your family circle with the circles, triangles, and squares where you have connections. The heavier the line, the stronger the support.
- ❑ Where else do you get support? Make a **dashed line** to connect your family circle with the people, places, and services whose support is not quite as strong.



The sample family map to the left shows that this single mother takes advantage of many community programs. She has drawn a heavy solid line to show she can rely on her best friend and church friends. The dotted lines she drew show that there may be problems with some services and relationships.

One goal for this family might be to improve the family's access to health care. The parent could be referred to community services not listed.

Adapted with permission from Community Unit School District #300, Carpentersville, IL. Originally adapted from CESA 5, Wisconsin Transition Project.

Action Step: Review your family map

Your family map will help you see all of the people and services that make up your personal family support network. After completing the map, talk with other family members, friends, staff, and service providers to help you answer these questions.

1. What people, places, and services support your family?

2. How can you strengthen the weak connections?

3. How does this network of family, friends, programs, and services help you reach your goals?

4. When your child moves to a new program, how will your network change?

5. Who could you add to your network?

Note: For additional activities related to family mapping, refer to *Building Supportive Communities* from the **Training Guides for the Head Start Learning Community.**

Action Step: Develop your transition plan

After all of your preparation, you are ready for a transition planning meeting. It may be necessary to schedule more than one meeting over a period of time in order to speak with all members who play a role in your plan.

1) Decide what action you will take and what the responsibilities of the sending and receiving staff will be.
2) Find out what records and information will need to be transferred. Who will share them and when?
3) List other action steps your team will take and write the name of the person responsible for completing the job. Also write in the date when the task will be done.

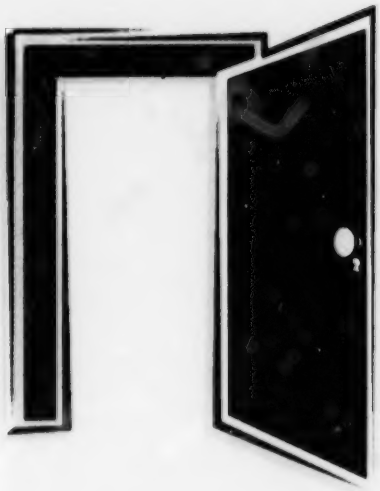
Use the chart below to keep track of the decisions made at a transition planning meeting.

Action to take:	Person responsible:	Date completed:

Action Step: Follow through

Follow the plan and check back to find out if it is working. If the plan isn't supporting your family, decide what other things your team can do. You might meet again as a team, meet with one other team member, or ask others to help you.

Action Tools to Help Parents Become Advocates



Program Action: Discuss Family Advocacy
Parent Action: Speak Out and Act for Children

Program Action: Hold a Panel Discussion
Parent Action: Take Part in Making Decisions

Program Action: Invite Discussion of a Family Center
Parent Action: Stay Involved

Program Action: Discuss Family Advocacy

Purpose

Families learn how they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as advocates for children.

Staff learn what skills parents have used as advocates for their child and what areas they would like to strengthen.

Suggested Materials

Tool 7—Parent Action: Speak Out and Act for Children
Information on state and local laws

Suggested Times

During home visits, parent-teacher conferences, transition planning meetings, or other one-on-one meetings with parents

Tips for Leaders

- You may need to remind parents of the ways they have been successful advocates in Head Start so they feel confident about using their skills in another setting.
- To learn more about local laws that impact parent rights and responsibilities, get to know others in the community who work with families and children. Suggest that parents do this too.

Leading the Discussion

- Use the information on side 1 of the Parent Action sheets to help parents understand how they can be advocates for their child during transitions and throughout the child's education. Ask parents to point out the transition advocacy steps they want to take.
- Review with parents their advocacy experience and skills by using the questions on side 2. Help parents plan ways to build their skills by taking part in program activities and using additional Action Tools.
- Use the checklist on side 3 to talk about the responsibilities of parents and schools. Explain that parents can use the checklist to identify and discuss with staff their concerns about the school.
- Share the list of rights on side 4 and explain that to exercise their rights and responsibilities parents need to know key contacts. Point out that sometimes they will need to be persistent and talk with more than one person. Suggest parents use side 5 to begin a directory of key contacts.

Parent Action: Speak Out and Act for Children

Purpose: Parents are the most powerful advocates children have in schools. Find out what rights and responsibilities you have to speak out and act for your child.

Head Start Programs must support parents as they **become advocates** during transitions both into and out of Early Head Start or Head Start. They must also educate parents to **exercise their rights and responsibilities** in the school setting.

Advocates: Speaking Out and Taking Action

What does it mean to be an advocate during transitions?

When your child moves to a new setting, you may find there are things you want to change or improve.

When you **speak out** to share information and voice your concerns, you are an advocate. When you **take action** to make improvements in programs or make sure your child is treated fairly, you are an advocate.

How can you be an advocate during transitions?

- ❑ Find out all you can about the new program and speak out about things that concern you. (See Tools 4, 5.)
- ❑ Take part in transition planning teams and share information about your child and family. (See Tool 6.)
- ❑ Learn about and exercise your rights and responsibilities. (See Sides 3 and 4 of Tool 7.)
- ❑ Take part in making decisions about your child's education, the program's operation, and policies that affect all children. (See Tool 8.)
- ❑ Join and involve other parents and community groups to take action for all children. (See Tool 9.)

A parent stopped coming to Head Start to volunteer after a day when a child in her group was too hard for her to handle.

I told her that she made a difference for her child and all the other children in the classroom. She decided to ask the teacher for suggestions for working with the child.

After getting a few tips from the teacher, the parent found things went smoother. Now she is one of our best volunteers.

Anyone could have told her that she was needed, but I think it helped that I was also a parent.

Former Head Start Parent

Action Step: Remember a time when you were an advocate for your child

What did you say or do to make sure your child was treated fairly? What was the result?

What made it hard or easy for you?

What skills do you think would help you be a better advocate (e.g. speaking skills, ability to work in a group, networking skills)?

Action Step: Plan how you will build your skills
(e.g. use Parent Action pages, ask a parent-leader to help you, attend support group meetings)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What responsibilities do parents and schools have?

While your child attends school or child care, you and the school staff **share the job of caring for and teaching your child.**

Parent responsibilities

- ❑ Make sure your child has nutritious meals, plenty of rest, and health care.
- ❑ Make sure your child is on time and attends the program every day.
- ❑ Pay attention to the care and education your child receives out of the home.
- ❑ Keep track of school goals and your child's progress. Make sure your child is learning what she needs to know to meet school- and district-specific standards.
- ❑ Communicate with staff and follow procedures to solve problems.
- ❑ Have high expectations for your child and always speak positively about education.
- ❑ Be involved in making decisions about your child's education.

School responsibilities

- ❑ Provide a safe and healthy environment for children.
- ❑ Share school goals, policies, and procedures with students and parents.
- ❑ Develop high standards for all students. Make sure students learn what they need to know to meet the standards.
- ❑ Provide extra help to make sure all students can meet the standards.
- ❑ Report on the progress of each student and the overall progress of all students.
- ❑ Develop and carry out plans for school improvement.
- ❑ Involve parents in their children's education.
- ❑ Explain to parents how the system works.

What rights do you have as a parent?

Sometimes parents and school staff may not agree about what is best for the child. Because parents have the major responsibility for their children's well-being, certain laws give parents power.

As a parent you have these and other rights:

- To ask the school to evaluate your child if she has a problem learning or adjusting, or may have a disability
- To obtain school policies, procedures, standards, and reports of outcomes such as student test scores, promotion, graduation, and discipline
- To see, understand, and have an opportunity to correct your child's school records
- To ask for related services that will help your child learn if your child has a physical or mental disability that interferes with a major life activity (for example, walking, talking, learning, or hearing)
- To meet with other parents and speak out about your concerns
- To obtain information about school policies, the course of study, and the school budget
- To have your child tested in the language he knows best
- To receive communication from the school in your primary language
- To ask for a due process hearing to help solve problems including any disagreement with the school about your child's disability, evaluation, education services, placement, and procedural rights
- To ask for extra services in the classroom to help your child with special needs

Adapted with permission from Parents Are Powerful by Anne Henderson (Center for Law and Education, Washington, DC, 1996).

Action Step: Finding key contacts

Find out who to talk with if you have a question or concern so you can exercise your rights and reponsibilities. Ask for the names and numbers of contact people in the new school system and for information on the kind of questions they can answer.

	Name	Phone Number
☎ Principal:		
☎ Teachers:		
☎ School counselor:		
☎ Program specialists:		
☎ Policy Council Chair:		
☎ PTA or PTO president:		
☎ Other parent leaders:		
☎ Head Start parents:		
☎ School board contact:		
☎ Elected officials:		
☎ Community advocates:		
☎ Other:		

Program Action: Hold a Panel Discussion

Purpose

Families meet with school representatives to learn how to take part in making school system decisions.

Staff develop community partnerships with school representatives.

Suggested Materials

Tool 8—Parent Action: Take Part in Making Decisions
Questions for Panelists
Panel evaluation forms

Tips for Leaders

- Invite school representatives, former Head Start parents, and community leaders to be part of a panel discussion.
- Prepare ahead of time a list of questions concerning parent involvement in decision making.
- Send or give the Parent Action pages to parents along with an invitation to attend the panel discussion.

Leading the Discussion

- Give panel members a set time limit for answering each question.
- Use both the prepared questions and others from the audience to involve all panel members in sharing information.
- At the end of the session ask parents to complete an evaluation and share any unanswered questions with you. Use the information to choose next steps for helping parents get involved in decision making.
- Publish a summary of the meeting and the next steps you have planned in your newsletter. Check to see if panel members have more information you might include in the newsletter.

Parent Action: Take Part in Making Decisions

Outcome: Parents have an important part in making decisions about the education and care their child receives. Follow these steps to make sure your voice is heard.

Navigating a new system

Schools and programs have different ways of making decisions. During a transition into a new school or program, parents need to find out how they can get involved in making decisions.

Decision making in Head Start

Parents in Head Start have specific decision-making powers.

Policy Council: A majority of parent representatives and other community representatives on Policy Council share decision making about the program with the governing body and management team.

Parent Committee: Groups of parents for each center, home-based program, or other options make decisions about curriculum and other child activities, as well as parent activities.

Each Parent: Head Start staff and parents work together to decide what activities should be developed to match their child's strengths, interests, and needs, as well as personal and family goals.

Beyond Head Start

When children transition out of Head Start, parent decision-making powers may change. Many schools do not need parent approval to make program decisions. But, they do offer ways for parents to become involved in decision making.

In any school or program parents have the right and the responsibility to be involved in making decisions about their child's education.

Moving to Title I Schools

Many children will transition into Title I preschools and elementary schools. These schools receive federal money to help make sure that low-income students receive the support they need.

Parents in Title I preschool programs have some of the same decision-making powers as those in Head Start because these preschools must follow Head Start Program Performance Standards for child development and education.

In Title I elementary schools, parents must be involved in making decisions about how the school uses Title I funds and how it involves parents. Every Title I school has resources you can use to find out how to become involved.

Action Step: Find out more about Title I decision making by:

- ❑ Attending Title I Parent Information Meetings
- ❑ Contacting the school or state Parent Involvement Coordinator
- ❑ Reviewing the written parent involvement policy and school-parent compact

Making decisions for your child

Advocacy Issues

During transitions you can ask questions about how these and other decisions are made about your child's education.

Your child's school

- ❑ Are children assigned a school or is there a choice?
- ❑ What can I do if I want my child to attend another school?
- ❑ What programs are available if my child is gifted or talented, speaks another language, or needs after school care?

Your child's classroom

- ❑ How do schools decide who will be my child's teacher?
- ❑ How can I request a specific teacher?
- ❑ If my child doesn't speak English, has special needs, or is having difficulty, what classroom choices are available?

Action Step: Choose how you will take part in making decisions about your child

- ❑ Fill out and sign forms
- ❑ Sign permission for records to be transferred
- ❑ Meet with one or more staff members
- ❑ Ask someone else to talk with staff
- ❑ Help develop an individualized education plan (IEP) if your child has special needs
- ❑ Discuss concerns with district or state level school administrators
- ❑ Request a hearing to review a decision

Making decisions in your school

Advocacy Issues

You can be an advocate on many issues in your program. Parents can help make decisions about:

- ❑ Parent involvement policies
- ❑ School-parent compacts
- ❑ School improvement plans
- ❑ Curriculum plans
- ❑ Parent group goals
- ❑ Community partnership initiatives
- ❑ Fundraising

Action Step: Choose how you will get involved in making decisions about the program

- ❑ Serve on a Policy Council or a school advisory committee such as the School Improvement Planning Committee
- ❑ Join and lead parent groups
- ❑ Meet with the principal or parent involvement coordinator to discuss your own ideas or the parent group's ideas
- ❑ Review and comment on the ideas presented to parents by committees or school staff
- ❑ Vote on decisions presented to parents

Making decisions in your community

Advocacy Issues

You can get involved at the local, state, and federal level, where decisions are made about the following issues:

Standards

- ❑ What students should know
- ❑ How they will be tested

Accountability

- ❑ Whether schools are responsible for what students learn
- ❑ Whether teachers should take tests and continue training regularly

Safety

- ❑ How to make sure children have enough adults watching them
- ❑ How to make sure school buildings and grounds are safe

Funding

- ❑ How much money schools need
- ❑ How to pay for more services in schools

Action Step: Parents play a big part in making these policy decisions. Choose how you will help.

- ❑ Speak at policy and budget hearings
- ❑ Sign and circulate petitions
- ❑ Call or write school board members, legislators, media representatives
- ❑ Keep up to date on which candidates support education
- ❑ Vote!

Take the next step

Action Step: The steps below can help you get involved with decision making for your child, program, and community

1. Learn what decisions need to be made.

2. Gather related information on the topic:
What are some of the choices?
Which one do you support?

3. Meet with school staff to share your information and ideas and find out what they think.

4. Review your choices again. You may be ready to make a decision or you may want to continue discussing ideas. Find out who else can help you.

Program Action: Invite Discussion of a Family Center

Purpose

Families gain ideas for developing a Family Center in the community.

Staff from your program and others can learn about the needs and interests of families in your community and how staff can support families' continued involvement in their child's education.

Suggested Materials

Tool 9—Parent Action: Stay Involved
Optional:

Videotape—*Building Community: How To Start a Family Center in Your School*
Book—*Family Center Guidebook* by Vivian R. Johnson.

[Both items are part of the *Family Center Starter Kit* from the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning. To order, call 1-410-516-8808.]

Tips for Leaders

- Review the Parent Action pages of this tool with emphasis on side 4.
- Prepare open-ended questions that encourage participation.
- Find local schools that have Family Centers and invite representatives to come to the meeting. Ask them to tell the group briefly about their center and the way it began.

Leading a Discussion

- Start the discussion by pointing out that parents' involvement in the Head Start program can prepare them for continuing to play an active role in their child's education. One way they might contribute is working with others to create a Family Center at their child's school.
- Ask participants to share some of their family's goals and interests. Then ask them to think about how a Family Center might respond to their needs and interests.
- Invite participants to identify community partners who might contribute to a Family Center. Suggest that they be included in any future meetings. Brainstorm about what partners could contribute—from food and clothing to tutoring and training, time and money, and more. Think creatively about space. If no room is available, what about shared space? Or a corner of the lobby?
- Ask invited guests to describe their Family Center and how it got started.
- Hand out the Parent Action pages and review side 4. If parents are interested in developing a Family Center, talk about next steps. Those interested in leading the effort should be encouraged to review side 3. Suggest that all parents read sides 1 and 2 and complete the Action Steps there.

Parent Action: Stay Involved

Outcome: You want to be involved in your child's new program. Join with other parents to overcome challenges to getting and staying involved in a new program.

Leading the Way

Head Start programs make a big effort to involve parents in the program. This means that Head Start parents often develop leadership skills. They also learn how much difference their involvement can make for their child. Being involved in the public school is sometimes hard, but Head Start parents can use their leadership skills to help others get and stay involved.

Parents want to contribute

Getting involved in a new setting can be challenging for many reasons. One of the most common reasons is that **parents do not know how they can get involved**. This happens because parents and school staff do not communicate as much as they need to. The fact is that parents want to be involved and have much to contribute.

Parents contribute the most when they share their skills, personal interests, and cultural knowledge.

One parent's success

At the beginning of the school year, I told my son's third-grade teacher that I would like to do something to get parents in the classroom. She gave me the class list and I called every parent. I asked them to give one hour to the class in any way they could. We had parents bringing in native dishes, talking about their careers, copying for the teacher, and a thousand other things. The bottom line is every parent had something to contribute and everyone participated!

Idaho Transition Demonstration Project Parent

Action Step: Review your parent involvement experiences and skills, your personal interests, and your cultural knowledge to see what you can contribute to the program

Ways I was involved in Head Start

- ❑ Helping the teacher in the classroom
- ❑ Working in the Head Start office
- ❑ Organizing parent meetings
- ❑ Representing parents on Policy Council
- ❑ Participating in parent-teacher meetings
- ❑ Working with my child at home
- ❑
- ❑

Skills I used (e.g. organized, good with kids)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Ways I can use my skills, interests, and cultural background to help the new program:

_____
_____

Parent Involvement in Schools

Parent involvement is changing in many schools. The U.S. Department of Education has many resources to help schools and parents work as partners. You can call the department for more information at 1–800–USA–LEARN or visit its web site at www.ed.gov

Some parent involvement challenges

- ❑ School is unwelcoming.
- ❑ Materials are not translated.
- ❑ Child care is not available.
- ❑ School activities are planned without parent input.
- ❑ School doesn't have parent involvement policies.
- ❑ Parents don't have the time to be involved.

Parents helping other parents

Action Step: You can find many solutions to your own challenges by expanding your personal support network to include other parents. Create your own solutions or use these:

Challenge: Child care is not available at the school and you can't bring your other children to meetings.
Solution: Swap baby-sitting.

Challenge: No transportation is provided for meetings at school.
Solution: Catch a ride or share a cab with another parent.

Challenge: Materials are not translated and you do not speak English.
Solution: Ask a parent to translate.

Parent Network Project: Information Network

In our school, RAIN stands for Referral And Information Network. RAINMAKERS are parents who help parents new to the country. I am a rainmaker. So far, we have helped 400 families with referrals.

We also advocated for creative ways to solve problems in school. We organized a lice-buster group, a homework club, an absenteeism outreach strategy, and a job club.

Now we have *a bill of rights* and mission statements to support parent involvement in schools and community agencies.

In addition, parents are always in school, test scores have doubled, and police sweeps of children absent from school have ended.

Adapted with permission from Katharine Briar-Lawson and *Education Week*, Vol. 14, No. 5, October 5, 1994.

Action Step: Organize a Parent Network

Parents are forming **Parent Networks** to find new ways to become involved. These groups organize activities and offer parents support. Review the steps below to see how you can form a parent network in your community.

1. Recruit parents: Remember that everyone has an interest in helping. Let them know you want to find new ways to help parents be involved at school and at home.

- ❑ Contact former Head Start parents
- ❑ Make an announcement at a school event
- ❑ Talk with individuals at school events
- ❑ Post a sign-up sheet
- ❑ Advertise in the school newsletter
- ❑ Ask school staff which parents have expressed an interest in getting involved

2. Choose a comfortable space to meet: You can offer your home, arrange for a community center room, or use places parents go often like the laundromat or park.

3. Take time to meet each other: Parents enjoy getting to know other parents. Remember to make new people feel welcome.

- ❑ Have a casual get-together
- ❑ Give everyone name tags
- ❑ Have several people bring food

4. Decide on your mission: Each group of parents will have their own challenges and solutions. You might decide your mission is to:

- ❑ Meet as a support group
- ❑ Organize parent-child activities
- ❑ Propose new policies
- ❑ Create an action project

5. Share the group's ideas: Whatever you find out about the challenges parents are facing, schools need to know. Be sure to coordinate any action you plan to take with staff and other parents. Use these suggestions to communicate.

- ❑ Have one parent meet with the principal or attend a staff meeting
- ❑ Write a brief article in the school newsletter
- ❑ Tell about the network during other parent meetings or school events
- ❑ Invite parents and staff to meetings
- ❑ Go door-to-door

Parent Network Action Project: Bilingual Reading Groups

One parent who spoke Spanish told her family service specialist that she *needed help to help her children.* The program decided to invite other parents and their children to a bilingual reading group in the Family Resource Center. Sometimes parents read children stories in their own languages and other times they held up pictures and the group made up a story to go with the pictures. Activities were done in one language and then translated into the other. The group usually had ten to twelve children and three to six parents.

Adapted from Fairfax County Early Childhood Transition Project report

Making Schools Welcoming

Many Parent Networks discover that parents do not feel welcome in the school. Some things your network can do are:

- ❑ Volunteer to contact new families
- ❑ Post community notices in the school
- ❑ Use a phone tree to keep parents informed

A **Family Center** can also make parents feel welcome by giving them information and support. These centers offer parents a variety of resources, activities, and opportunities to become a part of the school community.

Action Project: Develop a Family Center

Getting started

This long-term project will be successful if you work in partnership with other parent groups, school staff, business leaders, and community service providers. You can begin planning by asking questions.

What are the interests and needs of those in the school community?

- ❑ Survey parents, teachers, service workers, representatives from religious groups and community organizations
- ❑ Meet with the principal, parent involvement coordinator, school improvement planning committee
- ❑ Review Title I Needs Assessment that tells about the school's needs and resources

What are your resources?

- ❑ Separate room or shared space in the school or other community building
- ❑ Free furniture, toys, books, computers, or coffeepot from people and businesses
- ❑ Federal, state, and local government funds
- ❑ Foundation grants
- ❑ Staff and volunteers to run the center

Creating centers that work

Successful Family Centers offer lots of different activities. You can get many ideas by visiting other schools with centers in your community.

Family center activities that work:

- ❑ A drop-in coffee hour or breakfast club gives parents the chance to meet informally.
- ❑ Family nights attract parents with a potluck dinner followed by workshops and child activities that encourage home learning.
- ❑ Clothes closet and community job board bring support services into the schools.
- ❑ Referrals by teachers encourage parents to use resources.
- ❑ Media and business leaders are invited to center events in order to build support.
- ❑ A listening center helps parents work with their children even when parents have trouble reading.

Continuing Professional Development and Resources

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Staff and parents can expand their skills by networking with other parent training programs, joining local and national organizations, and researching current information on parent involvement in transition.

Parent Leadership

The following programs train parents to work with other parents. Contact these organizations to find out more about developing parent leadership skills.

HIPPY USA (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters)

HIPPY is a home-based early intervention program that uses parents to help their peers work at home with their preschool children. HIPPY USA is the national network that provides information, training, and technical assistance to existing programs and communities interested in starting new programs.

HIPPY USA
220 E. 23rd Street, Suite 300
New York, NY 10010
Phone: 1–212–532–7730
Fax: 1–212–532–7899
Web site: http://www.c3pg.com/hippy.htm

National Head Start Association (NHSA)

In December each year, the National Head Start Association offers a Parent Leadership conference designed especially for Head Start parents. Contact NHSA for more information:

National Head Start Association
1651 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 1–703–739–0875
Fax: 1–703–739–0878
Web site: http://www.nhsa.org/

Parents Anonymous

Parents Anonymous promotes parent leadership and mutual support to build and sustain strong, safe families. Weekly parent groups are led jointly by parents and professionally trained facilitators. Parents participate in program planning, implementation, and evaluation, and they also help with outreach, presenting the organization and its principles at local and national meetings.

Parents Anonymous
675 West Foothill Boulevard, Suite 220
Claremont, CA 91711
Phone: 1–909–621–6184
Fax: 1–909–621–6304
Web site: http://www.parentsanonymous-natl.org/

Family Involvement

Many organizations offer resources and networking opportunities. You can learn more about supporting children, building partnerships, and developing advocacy skills by joining these and other organizations:

Center for Law and Education (CLE) Community Action for Public Schools

This program helps families, schools, and communities work together to improve the quality of public education for low-income students. Membership benefits include newsletters, policy updates, and other resources.

Center for Law and Education
1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 510
Washington DC 20009
Phone: 1–202–986–3000
Fax: 1–202–986–6648

Child Care Action Campaign

Child Care Action Campaign is dedicated to providing parents and others with information on a wide array of child care issues. Parents can order a variety of materials to help them select good child care. Family Support Watch, one of the Campaign's programs, focuses on monitoring and strengthening the child care provisions of welfare reform.

Child Care Action Campaign
17th Floor
330 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
Phone: 1–212–239–0138
Fax: 1–212–268–6515

Family Resource Coalition of America

This national membership organization promotes family support principles, policies, and practices. The Coalition provides public education services, maintains an information clearinghouse, publishes materials, and sponsors conferences.

Family Resource Coalition of America
20 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1100
Chicago IL 60606
Phone: 1–312–338–0900
Fax: 1–312–338–1522
E-mail: FRCA@FRCA.org

MegaSkills

MegaSkills are qualities like confidence, initiative, and teamwork that help children succeed in school and beyond. The Home and School Institute emphasizes the educational role of the family in teaching these skills. It offers parent involvement workshops, home learning activities, and other resources.

Home and School Institute
1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 42
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 1–202–466–3633
Fax: 1–202–833–1400
Web site: http://www.megaskillshsi.org

National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents

The Coalition helps parents develop the skills and abilities needed to make sound decisions that will improve the quality of their children's education. The center offers parent resources and a quarterly newsletter and holds an annual conference.

National Parent Center
1541 14th Street, NW
Washington DC 20005
Phone: 1–202–547–9288
Fax: 1–202–544–2813

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

This program serves parents with children from birth through age five. The heart of the PAT program is the home visit. PAT and Head Start work together to benefit and empower families.

Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc.
10176 Corporate Square Drive, Suite 230
St. Louis, MO 63132
Phone: 1–314–432–4330
Fax: 1–314–432–8963
Web site: http://www.patnc.org

Parents for Public Schools

Parents for Public Schools supports and strengthens public schools in communities nationwide. The organization is committed to family involvement in public education. By calling the toll-free number listed below, parents can be placed on a newsletter mailing list, receive membership information, and find out how to start a local Parents for Public Schools chapter.

Parents for Public Schools
PO Box 12807
Jackson, MS 39236
Phone: 1–800–880–1222

Community-Based Family Involvement Opportunities

Parents can also find opportunities for involvement and leadership in community-based organizations that provide social, educational, and recreational activities. Examples include:

- Girls and Boys Clubs of America and other youth organizations
- Programs sponsored by the Y, community centers, and religious organizations
- PTA, PTO, or site-based management organizations at the local or school district level

Internet Resources

Early Childhood Development

On its Web site, the World Bank features information about child development from birth to age eight. Parents can find a chart outlining what children do and what they need at each stage of development, as well as requirements for healthy development, information about the effect of early care on brain development, and more.

Web site: http://www.worldbank.org/children/

Family Education Network

This site offers parents a host of homework help ideas and learning activities in a variety of subject areas, plus information on parenting, learning disabilities, and many other topics. It includes links to a wide range of stimulating, creative sites.

Web site: www.familyeducation.com/

FREE: Federal Resources for Educational Excellence

This Internet site leads to hundreds of interesting, educational Web sites for children, parents, teachers, and others. Topics include Parents Guide to the Internet, ways to help a child learn to read or do math, career information, and much more.

Web site: http://www.ed.gov/free/

I Am Your Child

All resources on this Web site are designed for parents of young children. The site highlights key characteristics of parenting that shape lifelong development and the impact of early care on brain development. It addresses questions such as "How can I afford child care?" and "How can I raise my child to be honest, caring, and good?" It also lists further resources ranging from books for parents and children, through radio and TV shows, to videos and Internet sites.

Web site: http://www.iamyourchild.org/

Kid Source OnLine

Created by a group of parents, this site gives parents lots of brief articles and information about education, health and safety, product recalls, and recreation. Materials are appropriate for children from infancy through grade 12.

Web site: http://www.kidsource.com/

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The NAEYC Web site offers a list of preschools accredited by the association and other resources. Early learning materials range from ways to explore reading, math, and nutrition to activities for learning about the weather, beginning to garden, imitating superheroes, fostering independence, and coping with violence.

Web site: http://www.naeyc.org/

National Association of Child Care Resources Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)

This association helps families find quality child care. On the Web site, the Child Care Aware page outlines the steps parents can take to locate child care. The site also discusses child care options, the features of quality child care, costs, and the way to use NACCRRA's network for child care referrals.

Web site: http://www.childcarerr.org/

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPIE)

The NCPIE World Wide Web page includes a comprehensive list of links to organizations that help foster family involvement in education. In addition, there are online resources for creating family/school partnerships.

Web site: http://www.ncpie.org/

National Parent Information Network (NPIN)

The purpose of NPIN is to provide information to parents and those who work with parents and to provide a forum for exchanging parenting materials. Information is available on topics including assessment and testing, child care, children's health and nutrition, early childhood learning, helping children learn at home, and parents and schools as partners.

Web site: http://www.npin.org/

National PTA

Visitors to the National PTA Web site can participate in a Children First discussion group online and sign up for a free Children First online newsletter. They can find out about PTA's programs, including parent involvement and leadership training for PTA officers. They can also look up information about local and state PTA groups and many child-advocacy organizations.

Web site: http://www.pta.org/

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education

This section of the Department of Education site gives information on home-school partnerships to promote learning and safe schools.

Web site: http://www.ed.gov/PFIE/

Teaching Strategies

Parents can help their children learn and grow by using suggestions from this site. It provides home activities to encourage active learning from infancy through grade three. Also included are guidance on what parents should look for in child care and classrooms and where they can find other good resources on the Internet.

Web site: http://www.TeachingStrategies.com/

Yahoo

This comprehensive resource lists hundreds of Web sites for families. The parenting section runs from ParentSoup to library resources and materials for parents with disabilities. Starting from the Yahoo home page, select Society and Culture, then Families, and finally Parenting.

Web site: http://www.yahoo.com/

ZERO TO THREE

Information for parents on this Web site include tips for fostering a child's growth and guidelines for selecting quality child care. Also available are short articles on infant massage, the experience of grandparents in raising grandchildren, the lessons one father learned in child care, and many other topics.

Web site: http://www.zerotothree.org/

The **Resources** section of the training guide *Transitions: Parents Are Key* is designed to be used with the Action Tools. In addition, these resources can be used independently as quick reference materials for those seeking information and examples of effective transition practice.

Ames, Carole, Madhab Khoju, and Thomas Watkins. ***Parent Involvement: The Relationship between Home-to-School Communication and Parents' Perceptions and Beliefs.*** **Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools & Children's Learning, 1993.**

This research report emphasizes the importance of strong home-school-community communications. It demonstrates how the attitude and involvement of parents affects the child's school success. To order a copy, call 1–410–516–8808 or fax 1–410–516–8890.

Bellm, Dan, Marcy Whitebook, and Patty Hnatiuk. ***The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum: A Handbook for Mentors.*** **Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce, 1997.**

This resource book and curriculum for mentors in the early childhood field provides information, exercises, and tools for enhancing skills. A self evaluation checklist and other self assessment tools are included. To order a copy, call 1–202–737–7700 or fax 1–202–737–0370.

Bellm, Dan, Marcy Whitebook, and Patty Hnatiuk. ***The Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum: Trainer's Guide.*** **Washington, DC: Center for the Child Care Workforce, 1997.**

This trainer's guide provides a curriculum for training early childhood teachers as mentors. It promotes training those in the field to be leaders and early childhood advocates. To order a copy, call 1–202–737–7700 or fax 1–202–737–0370.

Bickert, Toni, Diane Trister Dodge, and Judy R. Jablon. ***What Every Parent Needs to Know about 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grades.*** **Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1997.**

This parent guide to the early grades illustrates how teachers use their knowledge of child development to make learning interesting and meaningful. Parents can learn how their children become readers and writers, how they learn other subjects, how to talk with teachers about what their children are learning, and how to help with homework. To order a copy, call 1–800–637–3650.

Brady, S., and B. Rous. ***Meeting the Challenge: Transition Resources for Parents of Young Children with Special Developmental Needs.*** **Lexington, KY: Child Development Centers of the Bluegrass, 1994.**

This annotated bibliography describes transition-related resources and provides ordering information. Resources are divided into four categories: early childhood programs, public schools, after-school transitions, and life transitions. To order a copy, call 1–757–566–3300.

Resources

Building Community: How to Start a Family Center in Your School. **Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1996. (Videotape)**

This twenty-minute video shows family centers in action. It can be purchased separately or as part of the *Family Center Starter Kit*. To order a copy, call 1–410–516–8808.

Carter, Nick, and Lauren Kahn. ***See How We Grow: A Report on the Status of Parenting Education in the U.S.*** **Philadelphia, PA: The Pew Charitable Trusts, 1996.**

This book provides background information on the purpose and challenges of developing effective parenting education programs. Programs are profiled and discussed to provide the reader with examples of various models. To order a copy, call 1–215–575–9050 or fax 1–215–575–4939.

Chandler, Lynette K., Susan A. Fowler, Sarah Hadden, and Lisa Stahurski. ***Planning Your Child's Transition to Preschool: A Step-by-Step Guide for Families.*** **Champaign, IL: FACTS/ LRE Project, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1995.**

This booklet provides families with the tools and resources needed to plan for transitions. An appendix contains twelve handouts on topics such as family involvement in transition planning, participation on a transition team, and a sample transition timeline. To order a copy, call 1–217–333–4123.

Chang, Hedy Nai-Lin, with Dora Pulido. "The Critical Importance of Cultural and Linguistic Continuity for Infants and Toddlers." ***ZERO TO THREE*****, October/November 1994, pp. 13–17.**

This article explains how infants and toddlers learn about their culture through daily interactions. It offers suggestions to help caregivers develop cultural sensitivity and resolve conflicts with parents that result from cultural differences in child rearing. It explores the value of linguistic and cultural continuity. To order a copy, call 1–800–899–4301.

Community Action Toolkit. **Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel, 1995.**

This multimedia toolkit provides an overview of the National Education Goals and recommendations for developing effective community and school initiatives. Materials in the boxed set include: camera ready handouts; a WordPerfect pc computer disk version; an audiotape of public service announcements; and five booklets. Booklets included are titled: *Community Organizing Guide*; *Local Goals Reporting Handbook*; *Guide to Getting Out Your Message*; and *Resource Directory*. To order the toolkit, call 1–202–724–0015.

Decker, Larry E., and Mary Richardson Boo. *Community Schools: Linking Home, School and Community*. Fairfax, VA: National Community Education Association, 1996.

This booklet provides an explanation of how community schools are different from traditional schools. It outlines the goals and educational philosophy of community schools. It offers suggestions for getting started and developing the program. To order a copy, call 1–703–359–8973.

Dianda, Marcella, and Ann McLaren. *A Pocket Guide to Building Partnerships for Student Learning*. Washington, DC: National Education Association's Center for Innovation, 1996.

This booklet provides educators with a rationale for developing ongoing school-family-community partnerships. It describes sample practices for six types of involvement and specific suggestions for NEA local associations. To order a copy, call 1–202–822–7350.

Dodge, Diane Trister, and Joanna Phinney. *A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Education*. Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, Inc., 1990.

This booklet about the Creative Curriculum includes easy-to-understand examples of how children learn through play, the environment, the daily schedule, conversations, and home activities. Examples of statements parents can use to extend children's learning at home are given. To order a copy, call 1–800–637–3652.

Elovson, Allana Cummings. *The Kindergarten Survival Handbook: The Before School Checklist & A Guide for Parents*. Santa Monica, CA: Parent Education Resources, 1993.

This parent guide provides a checklist of skills a child needs to be ready for kindergarten. It also offers tips to help parents prepare their child for school. A Spanish-language version is available under the title *El Manual de Cómo Sobrevir el Jardín des Niños*. To order a copy, call 1–310–458–9758.

Harding, Nadine. "Family Journals: The Bridge from School to Home and Back Again." *Young Children*, January 1996, pp. 27–30.

This article provides information for teachers on using family journals to help link home and school. It gives examples of how one teacher used this strategy to learn more about her students. To order a copy, call 1–800–424–2460.

Resources

A Head Start Handbook of the Parent Involvement Vision and Strategies. **Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996.**

This handbook gives program staff background information on parent involvement. It outlines specific strategies for recruitment, enrollment, orientation, and family goal-setting to help involve parents as they transition into the program. Additional strategies strengthen experiences and capacities parents need as they transition out of the program. To order a copy, write Head Start Publication Management, P.O. Box 26417, Alexandria, VA 22313–0417; or fax 1–703–683–5769.

Henderson, Anne. ***Parents Are Powerful.*** **Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, 1996.**

This parent booklet explains what children should learn at each developmental stage. It also demonstrates how parents can be advocates at different educational levels and provides specific information on parent rights. The booklet also provides concise information on federal education programs, including Title I programs, IDEA, Vocational Education, and School-To-Work. To order a copy, call 1–202–986–3000.

Johnson, Vivian R. ***Family Center Guidebook.*** **Baltimore, MD: Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, 1996.**

This user-friendly resource book includes suggestions, quotes, and examples of successful family centers around the country. It can be ordered separately or as part of the *Family Center Starter Kit.* To order a copy, call 1–410–516–8808.

Kagan, Sharon L., and Barbara T. Bowman, eds. ***Leadership in Early Care and Education.*** **Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997.**

This book demonstrates the importance of developing leadership in early childhood educators and parents. It explains how parents are leaders within the home and provides strategies for developing a family-support environment that helps parents become leaders in the program and the community. To order a copy, call 1–800–424–2460.

Leaders' Guide to Parent and Family Involvement. **Chicago, IL: National PTA, 1996.**

This booklet is written for parent leaders interested in building parent involvement in schools. It provides background information and practical advice and includes a resource list of organizations and publications. To order a copy, call 1–800–307–4782.

Linking Our Voices. **Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1997. (Videotape and facilitator's guide.)**

This training program for policy council representatives helps parents understand their decision-making role in the program. The videotape includes interviews with policy council parents who have benefited from their involvement. In addition to providing guidance for trainers, the guide provides a separate packet of participants' handouts. To order a copy, write Head Start Publication Management, P.O. Box 26417, Alexandria, VA 22313-0417; or fax 1-703-683-5769.

Listen, Discuss and Act: Parents' and Teachers' Views on Education Reform. **Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 1996.**

This report reflects the information gathered from educational surveys and focus groups held with parents and teachers nationwide. It helps provide a new perspective on school reform and how to address barriers to involving parents in schools. The information is summarized in colorful and easy-to-understand charts. To order a copy, call 1-303-299-3692.

Little Beginnings: Starting Your Child on a Lifetime of Learning: The First Five Years. **Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1992.**

This booklet suggests home learning activities parents can use with children from birth to age five. It also provides an overview of skills important for school success. To order a single free copy, call 1-800-967-5325.

The Little Things Make a Big Difference: How to Help Your Children Succeed in School. **Alexandria, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1991.**

This booklet suggests home learning activities parents can use with school age children. It explains the importance of family work habits, parents' support of academics, and family expectations. To order a single free copy call 1-800-967-5325.

Moles, Oliver C. ***Reaching All Families: Creating Family-Friendly Schools.*** **Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1996.**

This comprehensive guide provides suggestions for expanding parent involvement in schools through innovative strategies. It highlights practices that encourage the development of two-way communication through personal contacts. In addition to the general information provided, the book provides educators with specific strategies to try with special parent populations. To order a free copy, call 1-800-424-1616.

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. **Chicago, IL: National PTA, 1997.**

This guide recommends six standards for parent/family involvement. Each standard is accompanied by quality indicators. Users are provided with suggestions and tools for developing and evaluating parent involvement policies in their communities. To order a copy, call 1–312–670–6782 or fax 1–312–679–6783.

Parent Involvement: A Training Manual for Head Start Staff. **Alexandria, VA: National Head Start Association; City of New York, Administration for Children's Services, Head Start; and National Council of Jewish Women Center for the Child, 1997.**

This Head Start training manual was developed to address staff issues and concerns identified through a special intervention project in New York City. By focusing on strengthening Head Start staff's professional image, improving their skills, and fostering empathy, the training enables staff to develop partnerships with parents. To order a copy, call 1–703–739–0875.

Parents Ask About Title I. **Portsmouth, NH: RMC Corporation, 1996.**

This parent information series of five booklets describes Title I requirements. In an easy-to-read format, it outlines requirements for standards, parent involvement policies, compacts, and school profiles. Parents can use the suggested action steps and questions to learn more. Information is available in English and Spanish. To order copies of the booklets, call 1–800–443–3742.

Parents' Guide After Head Start: Success in Public School. **Alexandria, VA: National Head Start Association, 1995.**

This parent pamphlet includes checklists for parent involvement in transitions before, during, and after leaving Head Start. In addition, a model letter to the principal, basic information on ways to be involved in schools, and ten essential elements for achieving success are included. To order a copy, call 1–703–739–0875.

Paulu, Nancy. ***Helping Your Child Get Ready for School,*** **Wilma P. Greene, ed. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1992.**

This Department of Education publication describes what it means to be ready for school and suggests age-appropriate activities for parents to initiate with their children. Also included are characteristics of children at different developmental stages and ways parents can support the needs of the developing child. To order a copy, call 1–800–424–1616 and request document CIC, 309B.

Powell, Douglas R. *Families and Early Childhood Programs.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1989.

This book provides a comprehensive review of research on family involvement in early childhood programs. Topics addressed include the effects of continuity and discontinuity on children, parent education and support, opportunities for future research, and program planning. To order a copy, call 1–800–424–2460.

Ramey, Sharon Landesman, and Craig T. Ramey. "The Transition to School: Why the First Few Years Matter for a Lifetime." *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 1994, pp. 196–199.

This article describes transition as a process that requires children and schools to become ready for each other. It lists key indicators of successful transitions to schools and includes a discussion of how these indicators represent mutual readiness—or children and schools preparing for each other.

***Ready to Learn: Preparing Children for Success in School.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1995. (Videotape of Satellite Town Meeting #21.)**

In this 60-minute videotape, parents, teachers, school administrators, and community leaders have an open discussion about school readiness issues. Their recommendations can be used by various parent, school, and community groups. To borrow the videotape, call 1–800–424–1616.

Regional Education Laboratories. *Continuity in Early Childhood: A Framework for Home, School, and Community Linkages.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Regional Educational Laboratories Early Childhood Collaboration Network, 1995.

This document describes a framework for providing continuity in early childhood education. It defines eight elements of continuity and enables communities to assess their own practices. To order a copy, contact your Regional Education Laboratory or call 1–800–424–1616.

***Responding to Children Under Stress: A Skill-Based Training Guide for Classroom Teams.* Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1994.**

This guide offers a staff development program that helps teachers support children who live in stressful environments. Eight 2-hour sessions are included. Specific sessions include supporting parents, the daily schedule, routines, transitions, and the learning environment. To order a copy, fax 1–703–683–5769.

Rich, Dorothy. *MegaSkills.* New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1992.

This parenting book provides practical suggestions for helping children develop school and life skills. The author shares various home learning activities that parents can use with their children. A chapter also provides suggestions for helping children feel more at home at school.

Ringers, Joseph, Jr. and Larry E. Decker. *School Community Centers: Guidelines for Interagency Planners.* Fairfax, VA: Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education, 1995.

This informational booklet provides guidance for those interested in developing school community centers. The process of planning and implementing change is outlined along with the key elements for success. To order a copy, call 1–703–359–8973.

Rogers, Margot. *Planning for Title I Programs: Guidelines for Parents, Advocates and Educators.* Washington, DC: Center for Law aad Education, Inc., 1996.

This book provides comprehensive information about Title I requirements and how parents and advocates can ensure schools adhere to them. It also suggests ways that advocates can reach, assist, and train parents. To order a copy, call 1–202–986–3000.

Smith, Pamela, Sharon Rosenkoetter, and Carolyn Streufert, eds. *Step Ahead at Age 3.* Topeka, KS: Bridging Early Services Taskforce, 1995.

This booklet is written for families and describes the transition process experienced by three-year-old children with disabilities. If offers a step-by-step guide to assist families through the process. This brief booklet is also available in Spanish. To order a copy, call 1–316–241–7754.

***Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1994.**

This publication emphasizes the need for families, schools, communities, businesses, and government to work together to improve schools. It includes information on school improvement research and examples of promising practices around the country. To order a copy, call 1–800–424–1616.

Ulmer, Sherry P. ***Developing a Training Program for Head Start Parents in Preparation for Public School Transition of Their Children.*** **Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova University, 1991.**

This paper outlines the process one Head Start Program director used to train parents on transition. It includes an outline of the training sessions and sample evaluation tools. To order a copy, request ERIC document ED339503 by calling 1–800–443–3742.

White-Clark, Renee, and Larry E. Decker. ***The "Hard-to-Reach" Parent: Old Challenges, New Insights.*** **Fairfax, VA: National Community Education Association, 1996.**

This publication provides an overview of barriers to family involvement. Case studies demonstrate the benefits gained when barriers are overcome. Many ideas are offered to help educators develop successful strategies for reaching all parents. To order a copy, call 1–703–359–8973.

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